

ZION'S HERALD AND WESLEYAN JOURNAL.

PUBLISHED BY THE BOSTON WESLEYAN ASSOCIATION, FOR THE NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCES OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

VOL. XXIX. { REV. E. O. HAVEN, EDITOR.
FRANKLIN RAND, AGENT.

BOSTON AND PORTLAND, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 1858.

Terms, \$1.50, strictly in advance.
Office, 36 Washington St., Boston. } NO. 15.

For Zion's Herald.

LETTER FROM ROME.

Evening Chant before a picture of the Virgin-Mary-Ship—Variety of Maries—The Immaculate Conception—Monument to its honor—America's patron saint—Carnival—Put out the light.

ROME, QUARESIMA, 1858.

Under my window down in the deep street, there hangs a beautiful picture of the Blessed Virgin, illuminated by I don't know how many votive lamps. Every evening some Greeks are accustomed to assemble before it and chant their vesper service. O how plaintively, mellowly, deliciously their "Kyrie Elegion" float up to me to-night, ay, past me, even to the eaves of One high. It seems as if I were again in the great Temple of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, or listening to the chants in the Athenian Cathedral. I can but respond, as I look down upon their earnest, upturned faces, and then up to the holy stars, "Aye, Kyrie Elegion! Kyrie Elegion!"

The chant is ended. The dark forms have moved away, and, as I turn to resume my pen, no sound falls upon my ear but the mellow roar of the neighboring fountain of Trevi.

It is astonishing how full Rome is of Maries and Mary-worship. Leaving out of view the three hundred and sixty-six churches, each of which has one or more altars consecrated to "Blessed among women," there is scarce a street in the city which is not decorated, (or disguised as is often the case,) with representations in carving, molding, or painting, of that same well known face and figure. Religious services are not confined in front of all of them, but votive lights are kept burning before them all night, and before some constantly night and day. Offering of flowers, silver hearts, &c., attest furthermore that the worship paid to "the Mother of God" is no dead letter—attest that people are constantly attributing favors and blessings to her efficacious intercessions, and through these votive offerings making grateful acknowledgment of them. There in every store, or cafe, or library stable, or school-room, you are sure to find a picture of her, and often lights burning before it. In stores I have noticed that the more rascally the keeper, the more lights are always to be found piously consuming themselves in her honor. The ratio is perfect. The biggest swindle in the city—perhaps the Pope's Custom House—is located in a purgated old temple, and go there at any hour you will find an illuminated Madonna looking down most smilingly and approvingly upon the sumptuous proceedings of His Holiness' officials. I dare say she smiled just as sweetly and just as approvingly on Prime Minister Cardinal Antonelli all last winter, when he was starving poor people to death by his infamous bread-monopoly. Then there are various religious societies here in her honor; among them chapters of that great "Arch-confraternity of the most Sacred and Immaculate Heart of Mary," erected at Paris in December, 1836, the great end of which is the conversion of sinners through Mary's mediation.

I have before me a history of the parent chapter at Paris, containing edifying accounts of the conversion of hundreds, detailed with minute particularity, and all the glory is attributed to "Our Lady." In one case Mary lengthened out the life of an invalid twenty days; in another, converted a notorious infidel without any human instrumentality, &c., &c. "But," says the pious historian, "not only are the prayers and supplications offered before the altar of Mary [that of the confraternity] heard and answered, but the most clement Virgin, with the same benignity and grace, responds to every prayer, from whatever place it rises to her," proceeding to give instances. In another place we read, "Not only is Mary the refuge of sinners, but also the consolation of the afflicted, the strength of the weak, the succor of Christians." They have a special book of prayers, which I have also seen; and among the blameworthy and sacrilegious productions which have ever been written, this deserves not to be forgotten.

Now there are various Maries, as you know; there is "Our Lady of Sorrows," and "Mary Mother of Purity," and "the Madre pi," &c.; in fact a Mary for every incident of life. If you are afflicted, she was the mother of sorrows. Are you glad, go commune with the exultant Mary of the "assumption," and so on through the chapter. But of all the Maries real, imagined, or possible, the most current here is "Mary of the Immaculate Conception." The Romans worship the "Mother of God," the "Queen of Heaven," the "Refuge of Sinners," &c.; but the special object of their devotion is, "Mary the sinlessly conceived." I suppose the secret of it is to be found in an inscription, which stands upon a marble slab in St. Peter's, not far from the altar:—PIUS IX. PONTIFEX MAXIMUS. IN HOC PATRIARCHALI BASILICA DIE VII DECEMBER MDCCCLIV DOCUMENTUM DEFINITIONIS IMMACULATÆ VIRGINIS DEIPARÆ, MARIE CONCEPTIONIS INTER BOLLENNIA PRO-NUNCIAVIT.

I quote from memory, but the amount of it is: "Pope Pius IX. promulgated in that cathedral, Dec. 8th, 1854, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the 'deipara' Virgin Mary." Great was the rejoicing thereat, as you know, throughout the Catholic world; as indeed was becoming upon the discovery of so important a religious truth eighteen hundred years after the supposed conclusion of Divine Revelation. A grand memorial was proposed in the form of a commemorative monument. Artists were set to planning and drafting. About \$60,000 were raised among the faithful, and if you walk down to the lower end of the "Piazza di Spagna"—the most fashionable square in the city—you will see the result standing in front of the Propaganda College. It is a splendid shaft of cipollino marble, surmounted by a bronze statue of the sinlessly conceived. Upon the gigantic pedestal are four fine reliefs, one of which represents the Pope in the act of pronouncing the new dogma; the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, inspiring it immediately meantime, through the peak of his pontifical hat. At the corners are four figures larger than life, representing Moses, David, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. Each is represented as having prophesied of the immeasurable worth of her conception, and the immediately and direct realization of such a prophecy, which can be found in their various writings, is inscribed upon their respective pedestals. As an example of the opinion of the quotations, take the following, which stands under the rapt and staring Ezekiel: "PORTA HÆC CLAUSA ERIT;" This gate shall be shut!!! (Ez. xlv. 2.) Ergo, the Blessed Virgin was immaculately conceived. Q. E. D. If that is not conclusive take the words of Moses: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Ergo, Mary was sinlessly conceived! The other inscriptions are equally pertinent.

But notwithstanding all the bulls, monuments, and medals, &c., which have been resort to in order to "Catholicize" the dogma, which St. Bernard so decidedly rejected, it is still all a bitter pill, and "goes down" rather hard in many quarters. A Protestant periodical of Germany, published last fall, some very curious and interesting French and Italian documents, which were nothing more nor less than most eloquent and earnest expositions of divers high dignitaries of the Romish Church in different parts of Europe, which they

had sent the Pope about the time of the promulgation of the dogma. They were exceedingly rich, and how they ever "leaked out" is the greatest wonder. Hence the Pope has set his ablest heads at work writing the doctrine up, as industriously and the unfeeling tribes of irrational animals, involves as great a difficulty, in respect to the justice of God, as the existence of pain and death prior to the existence of the dogma.

"After man entered upon his probation of obey-

ience to the infinite Proprietor and Sovereign of all, we find that death was the penalty of the law; and this was just; but that it should fall in consequence of his sin upon his innocent offspring and the unfeeling tribes of irrational animals, involves as great a difficulty, in respect to the justice of God, as the existence of pain and death prior to the existence of the dogma.

"We must, therefore, resolve the whole procedure

into the exercise of divine sovereignty, which, for

reasons hereafter to be explained, saw fit so to cre-

ate the world, that suffering and death should be

the inheritance of all sentient and irrational tribes.

To this we reply, we have always supposed it

was a good answer to the question, first put, that

it was the cause of suffering; and so far as the

Bible informs us, it is; and we have good reason to

suppose that before the sin of the first pair was

committed all the brute creation were as harmless

as they will be when the lion shall lie down with the lamb." But from the geological Bible, if we

may so call it, the brute creation, long before

Adam's existence possessed all the elements of

torturing their fellows with claws, and tongues, and

fangs that were necessary to keep up a constant

war among themselves to the final extinction of

their whole race.

Now we can see easily how the justice of God

can be vindicated in letting the siner suffer from his own fault; but, really, we cannot see how God could be just in creating these lower

animals to suffer that had never violated any law.

But the reason is hereafter to be explained." 7th

page. "But there is no need of giving up in de-

pend on this subject." The text, which explains to us the design of God, in reference to suffering and death, furnishes also the principle on which we may

vindicate the benignity and justice of God in con-

stituting the mortal nature of man, so as to involve the gloomy conflict of good and evil." The crea-

ture is made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by

desire. They would need the longevity of Meth-

atron.

But enough of the Immaculately Conceived

Mary. You Americans ought to know more about her than I, for did not some of your fellow-citizens

a few years ago in an ecumenical assembly, elect as a patron saint of the United States. "Mary the Immaculately Conceived?" Behold, is it not written in the book of the Records of the Catholic "conclavie?" One thing more I must add, however, but solely for the benefit of the new Bible translators. "Porta angelica" is really a curiosity. It is entitled "De innatuitate deipara sancte Virginis Conceptus," and consists of three immense quarto volumes, making 2104 pages, without counting the three voluminous introductions! A man of Passaglia's ought to be able to prove anything in such limits as those. Anyhow, if the poor Catholics are not to be allowed to question the dogma until they have examined all the arguments, or *argumentations* rather, in its favor, I fear few will ever acquire the right of dissent. They would need the longevity of Meth-

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"It is the principle of redemption and compen-

sation." On page 5th it is asked, "Why does the guileless infant, unconscious of any fault, feel the stroke of disease and sink into the grave?" A complete solution of this mystery is to be found in the depravity of human nature; but that is a fact still more astounding; it has perplexed all minds, and excited a discussion among thoughtful men which has only been called the 'conundrum of the ages.'"

On page 6th it is asked, "How the gloomy conflict of good and evil." The creature is made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by

desire. They would need the longevity of Meth-

atron.

Carnival is over. The weather has been

perfectly horrible; nothing but rain, rain, rain.

For the first time since '49 the uses of masks was allowed.

The only limit imposed upon the masqueraders was

to keep within the bounds of decency and to avoid

caricaturing the Pope and his officials, civil, military, and ecclesiastical. One or two days the weather was fine, and the spectacle very lively.

Spangled equipages went up and down the long "Corso" all the afternoon, discharging volleys of bouquets and "confetti" at each other, and at the gaily caparisoned balconies and "Palcos" on either side of the street. And such characters as figured in the scene! Here a beautiful long black plait of hair coming from under the boy's cap, which it had carefully been concealed, belies the "confetti" and "flowers, swearing and working like a powder-monkey" in the midst of a naval combat.

I have quoted largely from Bro. True's sermon,

but I could not avoid doing so without doing him injustice. I will now proceed to remark upon the sentiments set forth:

And first. It will be seen at once, that they, as a whole, involve the mystery of the infinite God, in a dependent and unfathomable mystery, and an attempt to offer as a reason for his conduct that a system of redemption and compensation is furnished to make

the ways of God appear an honorable and just.

Now who can see, if language means anything,

that this does involve the infinite God, in the charge of designing the existence of evil, or its

continuance by Adam's posterity, or as propagated by

spiritual generation, it all proceeds from the same omnipotent will."

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Edwards says, God disposes "the state of events in such a manner, for wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes, that sin if it be permitted or hindered will most certainly follow." Now it will be seen that this occurrence of sin, in consequence of its disposing and ordering events, enters into his design to make the world a better place, not to make it a worse.

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Herald and Journal.

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From this time, we will send the Herald for the remainder of the year for ONE DOLLAR.

Let it be observed, that those who wish to communicate now must speak at once, as we shall print only those letters to supply our actual orders. Persons subscribing after this time will be supplied from the time when their subscriptions are received. Let everybody know it!

PROVIDENCE CONFERENCE,

CONTINUED.

Mr. EDITOR.—In addition to what I sent you on Friday, I will state that the preceding elders represented on their several districts as being in a prosperous state. Bro. Titus states that the New England district is prospering beyond any previous year. The preachers were never so earnest, devoted and laborious. The membership is also greatly engaged. Bro. Palmer reports that about a thousand conversions have taken place on his district during the past year. Bro. Townsend has had peace and harmony in all his churches; and, notwithstanding hard times, they had realized substantial prosperity.

Bro. J. Mather preached in the afternoon, but I could not hear him. In the evening the anniversary Bible Meeting is held, at which addresses are made by Bro. Willett and Lathan. It was pleasant and profitable to have set before us the excellencies of the blessed Bible. May we love it more, and do more to put it into the hands of the destitute.

On Saturday morning the opening religious exercises were conducted by J. Mather. Some reports were read, and a large part of the session was occupied in reading the statistics of the various societies. There can be little given from these that would interest, unless the reader could have the whole reports. These must be considerable increase in the number of members, but the finances must have fallen off in very many instances. Our educational interests are shown to be in a prospering condition.

The evening was held the anniversary of the Conference Missionary Society. Drs. Hollock and Durbin addressed the meeting. The latter dwelt particularly on the providential origin of all our missions. The providence of God impelled the church to establish them.

Sunday was the great day of the feast. The usual Conference love feast was a season rich in spiritual enjoyment. After this the bishop preached a plain, practical gospel sermon, and then ordained the deacons. In the afternoon Dr. Durbin preached a clear, powerful and characteristic sermon. He seemed to have one of his happiest times, and spoke with great energy and power.

Some passages of the sermon were very touching and pathetic. The pulps of most of the evangelical churches in town were occupied by members of the Conference. In the afternoon the bishop ordained the elders in the Saxon Street Church. On Sunday evening was held the anniversary of the S. S. Union. Drs. Hollock and W. made the addresses.

Monday morning the Conference met at eight, but did not sit until nine, until 2, P. M. This was to give time to members to read their reports, and the cabinet opportunity to finish their work.

In the afternoon many of the reports were presented. These will be published. Dr. Hollock in a lengthy speech advocated the cause of missions. The receipts for the Biblical Institute were reported to fall short of the pledge of the Conference, fifty dollars or more, and the deficiency was made up by a collection.

Before finishing the business, the Conference adjourned to half-past seven. On coming together again Dr. Wise spoke on the Sunday School cause, and Dr. Porter gave us a lively, Yankee speech on the Book Concern, and on selling books. Various items of business were dispatched, and the customary resolutions of thanks were passed. We then joined to sing the 221st Hymn; Bro. E. Benton lead us in prayer, and we were ready to hear our appointments. Before reading them, Bishop Scott made a few brief remarks. He thanked the Conference for their constant and universal kindness and courtesy towards him. He congratulated them on having had such a harmonious session; and that they had said or done nothing which they would wish had not been said or done. Perhaps the most solemn and impressive scene at a Conference is the reading of the appointments. Where is exhibited more moral heroism—more faith in God, and in man than at such a time? The preachers have been hopefully entertained, and the session a very pleasant one.

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PROVINCIAL DISTRICT.

Chas. H. Titus, . . . President Elder. (P. O. Address, Williamson, Conn.)

Providence, Chardon Street—George M. Carpenter.

" Poor Street—James Mather.

" Matthew Street—Frederick Upton.

" Fountain Street—Jas. M. Carroll, Jn.

Cady, sup.

" South Providence—To be supplied.

New Bedford, Elm Street—Henry White.

" Fourth Street—Josiah T. Weston.

" Second Street—John Howson.

" Fifth Street—Henry Baylies.

" M. F. Pease—To be supplied.

Providence—P. O. Swanzy, Mass.—Varum.

A. C. Conant.

W. M. Morrison.

Woonsocket—Eliza B. Bradford.

Cumberland and North Attleboro'—(P. O., Diamond Hill, R. I.)—Abel Gardner.

Providence—E. F. Upham.

Burrillville—To be supplied.

East Greenwich—Richard Donkersley.

Wickford—Chas. S. Hazard, sup.

Osmond—J. C. L. Ladd.

Plain—W. H. Richards.

David Patten, Prof. in the Biblical Institute, Concord, N. H., and member of the Quarterly Conference, First Church, Fall River, Mass.

Abed Stevens, Editor of Christian Advocate and Journal, and member of the Quarterly Conference, Matthewson Street, Providence.

Daniel Wise, Editor of Sunday School Publica-

tions, and member of the Quarterly Conference, St. Paul's, Fall River.

George W. Quares, Principal of Providence Conference Seminary, and member of Quarterly Conference, East Greenwich.

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(P. O. Address, Williamson, Conn.)

Sandwich and South Sandwich—Nathan P. Philbrick.

Chatham—Lorenzo E. Dunham.

West Sandwich—John B. Gould.

Montville and Salem—Supplied by Manuel Kinn.

Northwick, Main Street—John B. Gould.

" West Main Street—John B. Gould.

" South Street—David H. Elmer.

" North, (P. O., Northwick Town)—Ino. Wheare.

Greenwell—Supplied by George L. Lipsett.

Franklin and Lord's Bridge—To be supplied.

Hanover—To be supplied by C. D. Fillmore.

Hopkinton—To be supplied by James Pack.

Vaughn and Griswold—To be supplied by John Sheffeld.

Plainfield—Robert Parsons.

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